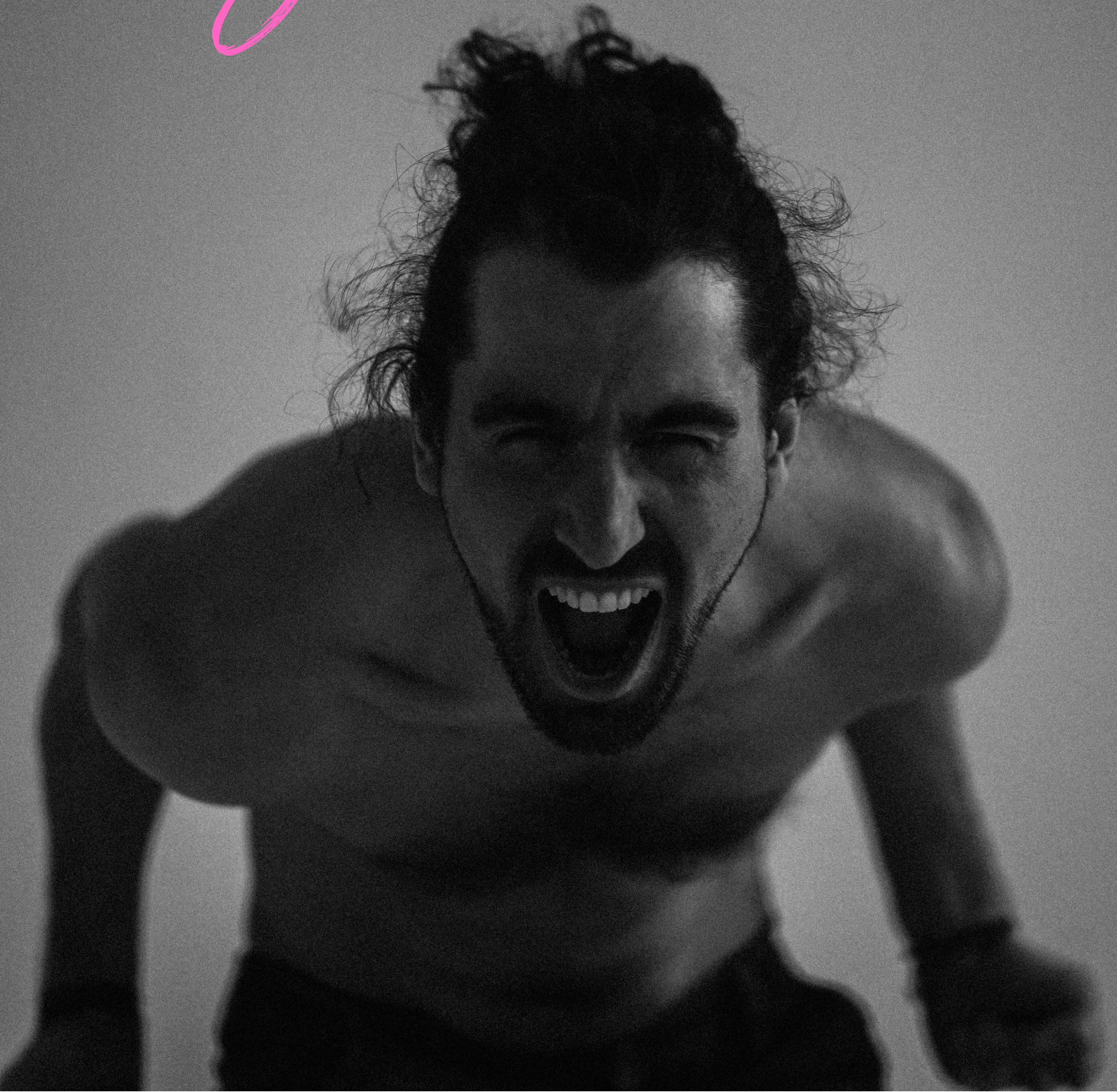**What is Anger?**

Anger is an intense emotion you feel when something has gone wrong or someone has wronged you. It is typically characterised by feelings of stress, frustration, and irritation. Everyone feels anger from time to time. It's a perfectly normal response to frustrating or difficult situations.

Anger only becomes a problem when it's excessively displayed and begins to affect your daily functioning and the way you relate with people. Anger can range in intensity, from a slight annoyance to rage. It can sometimes be excessive or irrational. In these cases, it can be hard to keep the emotion in check and could cause you to behave in ways you wouldn't otherwise behave.

Characteristics

When we are angry our body goes through certain biological and physiological changes. Examples of biological changes your body might go through include:

- Increased energy levels
- Raised blood pressure
- Spike in hormones like adrenaline and noradrenaline
- Increase in body temperature
- Increased muscle tension.
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Anger doesn't look the same in everyone and we all express it in different ways. Some outward characteristics you might notice when you are angry include.

- Raised voices
- Clenched fists
- Frowning or scowling
- A clenched jaw
- Physically trembling
- Rapid heartbeats
- Sweating excessively
- Pacing excessively

Complications

Anger is a completely normal and typically healthy emotion. However, it can be detrimental to both your emotional and physical health when you lose control of it. When you are angry your body goes through some physiological and biological changes.

Your heart rate quickens and your blood pressure spikes. Your body also releases hormones like adrenaline and noradrenaline. Putting your body through these changes often, by repeatedly getting angry, can lead to medical conditions and complications such as:

- High blood pressure
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Substance abuse
- Gastric ulcers
- Bowel disease
- Diabetes

Identifying Anger

Anger doesn't look the same in everyone as we all express it differently. For some people, screaming might be an outlet for their anger while others might express it by physically hitting an object or even another person.

Anger is a normal human emotion, but it's important to find healthy ways to express it so as not to alienate people around us. Expressing anger healthily is also important for your mental health.

Causes

Anger can be caused by either external or internal influences. A person or an event could make you angry. You could be angry because someone cut in line in front of you in line. You might feel angry when you are emotionally hurt, threatened, in pain, or in a confrontation.

Sometimes we use anger to replace other emotions we would rather not deal with, like emotional pain, fear, loneliness or loss. In these cases, anger becomes a secondary emotion. Anger could be a reaction to physical pain, a response to feelings of fear, to protect yourself from a perceived attack, or in response to a frustrating situation.

- Dealing with the loss of a loved one
- Losing a job
- Going through a breakup
- Failing at a job or a task
- Being fatigued
- Getting in an accident or getting a condition that causes physical changes in your body (for example, losing your sight or your ability to walk)

Anger could also be a symptom or response to a medical condition. Anger could be a symptom of depression, substance abuse, ADHD or bipolar disorder.

Types of Anger

There are three main types of anger.

- **Passive-Aggressive Anger**: Here, a person tries to repress their anger to avoid dealing with it but typically ends up expressing it in unhealthy and undermining ways.
- **Assertive Anger**: This can be a healthy option for expressing anger. It involves handling anger in a controlled manner by using your words to calmly explain and try to diffuse the situation. Here, anger is expressed in a non-threatening way.
- **Openly Aggressive Anger**: This type of anger might be accompanied by physical or verbal aggression such as screaming or hitting things. The aim of this type of anger is typically to hurt the person the anger is directed at emotionally or physically.

Anger can also be expressed in either one of two ways: verbally or nonverbally.

- **Verbally**: When a person expresses their anger verbally, you are likely to see them raise their voices. They might become insulting and say hurtful things if their anger is directed at another person.
- **Nonverbally**: You'll notice some slight physical changes in a person who expresses their anger nonverbally. They might frown or scowl and clench their jaws and fist. They might also lash out at another person or object, sometimes causing physical damage to the person or object and in some cases even hurting themselves.

The two ways people express their anger are not mutually exclusive and it's possible to see a person expressing anger in both ways.

Treatment

Anger is a normal emotion we all feel, and for most people, they can find ways to express it in a healthy way. However, some people need treatment. The most common way to treat excessive anger is with therapy.

Therapy

For most people, it's easy to identify the triggers and emotions behind their anger. But some people experience anger suddenly and intensely without being able to curb it or identify the triggers behind it.

If you are experiencing frequent and intense bursts of anger that are causing physical and emotional damage to you or the people around you then you might need professional help with dealing with your anger.

Anger Management therapy is used to help you learn healthy ways to cope with the emotion.

Coping

Finding ways to cope with anger is very important. When we allow anger to take control of our lives, it can affect everything we do. It can damage relationships with our loved ones and cause problems in our workplace. If you've been finding it difficult to keep your anger in check in certain situations, here are a couple of coping mechanisms that can help.

- **Identify the Cause**: The first step to coping with anger is identifying the root cause of your anger. It could be another emotion—maybe one of fear or loneliness. It could be an altercation you had or an unpleasant thought that came to mind.
- **Meditate:** Meditation is very beneficial in helping to control human emotions. You can start with simple meditation techniques like deep breathing exercises. When faced with a situation that makes you angry, take a second before reacting. You can take several deep breaths to calm yourself or try to count until you feel yourself become calmer.
- **Work Out**: Exercising isn't just great for your physical health—it's also beneficial for your mental health. It's also a way to channel out emotions like anger in a useful and productive way. Going for a quick run or swim when you are angry could help defuse the emotion.
- **Let It Out**: Don't bottle your anger up. Expressing your anger when you feel it is the healthiest way to get through it. Bottling up the emotion is most likely to cause a sudden and intense outburst when you least expect it.
- **Avoid Triggers:** If you are quick to become angry, it's useful to try to identify and avoid your triggers. If you are often triggered when having a conversation with a particular person or about a particular topic, avoid them or that topic until you've learned how to have better control over your anger.

Learning to cope with your anger is a skill you can learn. It can also take some time to learn it, so don't beat yourself up when you find yourself slipping into old habits when you are angry. Go through coping mechanisms that have worked for you and try them again.

It's important to remember that when expressed properly, anger is a healthy emotion. It can also be beneficial in dangerous situations, as the emotion triggers our fight or flight response.
In some cases, this can be helpful in getting us out of a dangerous situation.